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New York

President:	Mr. Rycroft	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2017/206)

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The meeting was called to order at 12.05 p.m.

Expression of sympathy on the deaths of two United Nations Experts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The President: On behalf of the members of the Security Council, I should like to reiterate our condemnation, in the strongest terms, of the deaths of Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalan, from the Group of Experts, who were senselessly killed while conducting their work in the Kasaï Central region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The members of the Security Council express their deepest sympathy to the families of the victims and to the Governments of Chile, Sweden and the United States, as well as to the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to the United Nations Secretariat.

Michael and Zaida lost their lives seeking to bring peace to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its people.

I now invite Council members to rise to observe a minute of silence in their memory and in the memory of all the victims of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The members of the Security Council observed a minute of silence.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2017/206)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Republic of Tanzania to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Augustine Phillip Mahiga, Minister for Foreign Affairs, East Africa, Regional and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2017/268, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/206, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uruguay

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2348 (2017).

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements after the voting.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2348 (2017), which renews the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The resolution we have just adopted is the outcome of negotiations that were not always easy, but it is a text of significance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to the United Nations.

I would like to highlight three reasons why this positive text is important.

First, the Security Council today has sent a message of unanimity and unity in our support for MONUSCO and for stability and democracy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which as we know is facing significant challenges.

Secondly, with the adoption of the resolution, MONUSCO — which has a defining role to play — now

has an adapted mandate focused on two major strategic priorities: the protection of civilians and support for the implementation of the 31 December agreement and the electoral process. This is a critical point, as the goal of the negotiations that have just concluded was to adapt MONUSCO to the political and security issues that the Democratic Republic of the Congo has to address, in particular this year.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo finds itself an unprecedented institutional situation. The mandate of all its electoral institutions has expired. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has entered a phase of transition on the basis of the political agreement signed on 31 December 2016 until the elections scheduled for the end of this year. The agreement, which was reached thanks to the outstanding efforts of the Conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo, constitutes the only credible road map for an end to the crisis, but delays in its implementation are very worrying. It is essential for the stability and future of the Democratic Republic of the Congo that the agreement be implemented as soon as possible and that the elections be held.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is also facing a worrying security situation with the persistence of armed groups in the east of the country and the appearance of new outbreaks of violence, particularly in Kasaï, where many Congolese have died over the past year and where two United Nations experts — as you recalled, Mr. President — recently died in tragic circumstances. On behalf of France, I wish here to reiterate our sorrowful condolences and deep sympathy to the families of the two victims and their countries. Civilian populations must be protected from such violence, whose perpetrators must be identified and brought to justice.

The third reason why this resolution is particularly important is because it adapts the composition of MONUSCO in a consistent and thoughtful way so that it can better respond to the challenges facing the country. The troop ceiling has been adjusted to better reflect the reality of deployment on the ground, but it is mainly the composition of the force that has been revised through the replacement of certain troops by specialized units able to intervene quickly and in a mobile way in the specific context of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. From the very outset, this mandate makes MONUSCO more reactive, more mobile and more focused on the essential, guiding priorities that I have just enumerated.

For the future, let us be clear. The task is heavy but MONUSCO has reinvigorated means at its disposal. In that spirit, I should like on behalf of France to reiterate our confidence in the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Maman Sidikou.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): First, I want to express, on behalf of the United States, the sadness and heaviness we all feel at the loss of Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalan. I know my friends in the Swedish delegation feel the same way, but it is very telling that when we focus so much on these types of things and what we are trying to do, we have to remember the people on the front line who are trying so hard to protect people on the ground. These are real people with real families who make real sacrifices. It is a sobering reminder that we can never forget that when we have people on the ground trying to keep peace, we have to do all we can to make sure that we are keeping them as safe.

I want to thank Ambassador Delattre for his time and effort and for the negotiations and the care with which all of this was done. I certainly want to tell the Security Council how pleased I am that we that we moved forward, because the whole mission was keeping the Congolese people in mind, and when we look at these peacekeeping missions what we need to focus on is not the number of people we have on the ground but the quality of the work that is happening on the ground. What we are seeing is an area where we can have thousands and thousands of troops, but if they are not really working to keep the Congolese safe, none of that matters.

I was therefore very pleased that we cut the troop ceiling, but we made sure that the troops are actually going to be more effective where they are deployed. As François said about the specialized units, the key is to make sure that the elections are safe, that we are keeping people safe and that we are actually looking at the political problems on the ground. The idea that we are really pushing towards long-term stability and good governance is something we should all be very proud of.

Always prioritizing the protection of civilians is the one thing that I think is most important. We are very grateful to the contributing troops that come into the area, but we can never forget that the whole goal is to keep the Congolese safe. In order to do that, we have to hold the troops that are actually doing this accountable,

and what I believe was one of the best things that came out of this exercise was the strategic review that we will get back in September, because what we cannot do is walk away from this and say our job is done. What we need to do is keep looking and making sure that what we did is actually working and effective and meeting the goals we have set.

That is why I thought it was very important and appreciated hearing France affirm the specific indicators that we are going to be watching. We actually have measurables now so we can look back and see where the troop failures are happening, because we owe it to people like Michael and Zaida on the ground to let them know what is expected and what we need to have happen so that they can be protected. I think that now having measurables whereby we can do that and hold those troops accountable to do the best job they can is going to be important.

With that, I also think that moving this focus away from all of the other things related to the mandate and towards the people and making sure it is effective and successful is going to be good for all of us, because at the end of the day we have to honor Michael and Zaida. I think that the way we honour them is by making the Mission stronger and more effective. I believe that the entire Security Council did that today, and I am very proud to be a part of it and to see what we have done and how we have done it. I look forward to continuing to work on this issue so that we can make sure that we eventually get them to a peaceful and stable place.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like to express our deep sorrow and condolences to the Governments of the United States and Sweden and the families of the two experts who recently lost their lives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I was honoured to work closely with Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalan in my capacity as Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They were a true inspiration. They were brave and dedicated to their work, despite the risks and difficulties that surrounded their mission.

The heinous event that claimed their lives reminds us of the difficulties and tragedies confronting many victims of violence in the Congo. We must therefore work with greater determination and commitment to ending the violence and establishing permanent peace in the country. This painful event also reminds us of the sacrifices made by United Nations personnel in the field, be they military, police officers or civilians. These sacrifices deserve all our gratitude and respect.

Egypt welcomes the adoption today of resolution 2348 (2017). It stresses the importance of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), which plays a vital role in supporting stability and establishing peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That is the same message of the communiqué issued today by the African Union Peace and Security Council. We welcome the fact that supporting the 31 December 2016 political greement is one of the strategic goals of MONUSCO's mandate, which is also charged with providing support and assistance for the elections process, given the importance of the agreement to maintainng security and stability in the country. Egypt calls for intensifying efforts to overcome the current deadlock concerning the special arrangement talks. We look forward to the resumption of the mediation efforts by the Conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo, as well those of the African Union.

The many challenges confronting the Democratic Republic of the Congo at the political and security levels and the increasing activities of armed groups and the spread the violence serve to underscore the need to provide human and financial resources to MONUSCO, including supporting and enhancing the role of the Congolese army so that it can confront those challenges. We agree that we need to take advantage of peacekeeping operations and increase their efficient use of resources, as well as when it comes to other United Nations activities. We welcome the commitment of the Secretary-General in that regard. Moreover, we believe that reconsidering the number and resources of peacekeeping forces should not be based solely on realizing savings. We need to carry out a comprehensive study of the situation and the needs on the ground and to evaluate the nature of the resources required to enable any mission to implement its mandate, so that they do not face shortcomings that could have an adverse effect on their performance.

Egypt is proud of its role as a MONUSCU troop-contributor, as well as in other United Nations missions. We consulted with other MONUSCO contributors with regard to the contents of today's resolution. Troop-contributing countries(TCCs) are one of the main pillars of the United Nattions peacekeeping system. Through their troops, TCCs make great sacrifices in the

service of peace and security. Any efforts to enhance the efficiency of troops and overcome shortcomings in their performance must therefore take place through a triangular partnership among TCCs, the Secretariat and the Security Council.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): At the outset, let me join previous speakers in expressing condolences to the families of the two brave and dedicated members of the Group of Experts — Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalan — killed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The parties responsible for their deaths must be held accountable.

Japan welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2348 (2017). I would like to thank France for taking the lead in preparing the resolution. Japanese is pleased to have co-sponsored it. Our common goal is to stabilize the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and achieve a progressive exit of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). Let me underscore two points in that regard.

First, through this resolution the security Council reaffirms its strong support for the implementation of the 31st December 2016 political agreement, mediated by by the Conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo. Japan calls on President Kabila and all Congolese political actors to swiftly implement the agreement and accelerate preparations for elections, to be held by the end of this year. That is the only viable way to consolidate and sustain peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Secondly, Japan values the fact that the Security Council has reaffirmed its commitment to making the Mission more efficient by authorizing a clearer and more prioritized mandate for MONUSCO in line with the Secretary-General's efforts. Japan reaffirms its full support for MONUSCO and for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Maman Sidikou.

Mr. Cardi (Italy) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, on behalf of my Government, I should like to express my condolences to the families and the two members of the Group of Experts killed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We also extend our sympathy and solidarity to the United States, Sweden and Chile. We share their pain and sadness.

We welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2348 (2017), which sends a very strong strong signal of the Security Council's unity on such an important issue. Allow me to thank the French delegation for its efforts on the text, which is an outcome commensurate with the challenges we face today.

The renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) is a tangible sign of the willingness of the United Nations to continue supporting the people and the Government of that country. This year marks a major milestone in the country's history, and this peacekeeping force must ensure the protection of civilians and support the implementation of the Saint-Sylvestre agreement and the electoral process, which are two complimentary elements of the strategy for maintaining peace in the country.

The commitment of troop-contributing countries remains crucial. We hope that it will be possible to find increasingly specialized resources that can provide greater effectiveness and mobility to the Mission. We should of course also appreciate the efforts of troop-contributing countries in extremely difficult conditions. The issue of the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions is very important, and we must increasingly improve their performance. We remain willing to work to that end.

In that regard, Italy agrees with the analysis and proposals made by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2017/206) to the Security Council. We hope that the mandate in today's resolution regarding the possibility of cooperation among various missions can prove to be a sufficiently flexible tool to bolster the effectiveness of MONUSCO.

We stress the importance of swiftly carrying out the specific arrangements set out in the Saint-Sylvestre agreement, which was signed thanks to the mediation of the Conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo, which I commend. I should like to conclude with a call for political compromise in order to hold peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Shen Bo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China is deeply troubled and disturbed at the death of two United Nations officials. I should like to extend our condolences to the families of Mr. Michael Sharp and Ms. Zaida Catalan and to the countries concerned. The

safety and security of United Nations personnel must be effectively guaranteed. Any attack on United Nations personnel is intolerable.

China voted in favour of resolution 2348 (2017), which the Security Council just adopted. China has always paid close attention to the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We appreciate the efforts made by that country's Government to facilitate the peace process, safeguard national stability and promote economic development. We encourage the parties to actively implement the political agreement and resolve their differences through dialogue and consultation.

China has always supported African countries in addressing African issues in African ways and has supported regional and subregional organizations in Africa in playing an active role in resolving regional problems. We hope that the countries of the Great Lakes region will strengthen their cooperation and jointly implement the Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes Region, and achieve common regional security and development. The international community should act, on the basis of respecting the country's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and continue to provide constructive assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

China supports the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in its implementation of its mandate and in the constructive role it plays to assist the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in advancing the political process, combating armed groups and facilitating humanitarian access.

United Nations peacekeeping operations need to adjust their mandates and scope in a timely manner in accordance with changing circumstances and the will of the State concerned. We hope that, in accordance with resolution 2348 (2017), the Secretariat will continue to engage in dialogue with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the implementation of the mandate of MONUSCO, as well as on its financing, while fully taking into account the views of that Government, and stepping up the reform of the peacekeeping system so as to enhance the operational effectiveness of the Mission and bolstering its ability to cope with complex situations.

China has always supported the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and has over the years provided , within our abilities, assistance to its nation-building efforts. China has sent more than 200 peacekeepers to MONUSCO. China stands ready to work with the international community and continue to play a constructive role towards the realization of lasting peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): Ukraine supported and co-sponsored resolution 2348 (2017) because, in our view, it will pave the way for further stabilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Today, the Security Council adopted a document that is intended for the first time to privatize tasks of MONUSCO primarily for the protection of civilians and support for the implementation of the agreement of 31 December 2016. We hope that that approach will help the Mission to address existing challenges in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in a more efficient and effective manner.

The years 1970, 1977, 1984, 2006 and 2011 marked the previous elections held in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We hope that in 2017 the people of that country will again have a chance to choose their Head of State and determine their future in a free and fair manner. It may take a year for the long-awaited peace and stability to appear on the horizon. We therefore call on all national stakeholders to spare no effort in swiftly implementing the agreement of the 31 December 2016 without any preconditions.

I cannot but join others in expressing our deep condolences to the families of Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalan of the United Nations group of experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as to the United States and Sweden. The world and the United Nations lost two brave and decent people who, while risking their own lives, tried to bring peace and stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. No effort should be spared to hold accountable those responsible for that outrage.

Finally, since this is the last day of the United Kingdom presidency, I would like to sincerely congratulate you, Sir, for a very successful and productive month characterized by a masterful British touch.

Mr. Ilichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We join others in conveying our condolences and sympathies following the deaths of the two

young and courageous experts, Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalan.

Russia voted in favour of resolution 2348 (2017), extending the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). We believe that, during this difficult time in the country's political history, it is important for the Mission to continue to carry out its work in stabilizing the eastern areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and facilitating the implementation of the political agreement of 31 December 2016. We believe that all of that will be carried out by the Mission in full respect for Congolese sovereignty.

At the same time, we are not pleased with the approach taken in deciding to reduce the size of MONUSCO. In that regard, the Russian delegation initially proposed identifying tasks that could be discontinued without prejudice to the performance of the mandate or that could be delegated to the country team, only thereafter reducing the number of Blue Helmets deployed. We regret that financial and sheerly numerical considerations prevailed.

We are also concerned about the plan to have two parallel cycles of reporting to the Security Council on the activities of a single peacekeeping operation, as set out in the resolution. We believe that the solution that was forced through by the informal leads on that issue could negatively affect the implementation of peacekeepers' mandate and result in problems with regard to the organization of the Security Council's work. We trust that our colleagues will follow their own stated understanding whereby the Secretary-General's submission of updates on the implementation of the internal Congolese agreement will not automatically mean holding Security Council consultations.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2348 (2017), renewing the mandate of United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), including the Force Intervention Brigade. We understand that it has indeed been a difficult negotiation process, and not everyone has secured what they wanted. In the end, we are pleased that the Security Council was able to achieve consensus through compromise. We believe that maintaining that spirit of unity within the Council on this and other matters is absolutely important. France should be commended for ensuring that that is what transpired during negotiations on the draft resolution, of which we are very appreciative.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is at an important political juncture. The agreement reached by the Congolese political actors on 31 December 2016, with the mediation efforts of the Conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo, has without any doubt averted a major political crisis. The immediate implementation of the agreement is indeed the key to preserving the stability of the country and paving the way for a peaceful political process.

It is indeed appropriate that the Security Council has called on all stakeholders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to redouble their efforts towards a speedy conclusion of the ongoing talks on the implementation modalities in line with the 31 December 2016 agreement and proceed without further delay to preparations for the presidential and legislative elections due to take place before the end of 2017. Mobilizing the necessary resources for the electoral processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensure long-term security and stability in the country and the region in general is indeed critical. It is also important that the countries of the region, the African Union and the United Nations act in unison and put their full weight behind those efforts to ensure a smooth transition process and the holding of elections as envisaged in the agreement. In that regard, we would like to refer to the communiqué adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union two days ago on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which underscored the latter point.

The deteriorating security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is taking a heavy toll on the civilian population. We are particularly concerned about the activities of armed groups in the eastern part of the country and the resurgence of negative forces. Those have enormous implications with regard to peace and security not only for the Democratic Republic of the Congo but also for the Great Lakes region. That needs to be addressed seriously within the PSC framework agreement. The role of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region and his continuous regional and international engagement in the promotion of peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region, including through the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for

the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, in consultation with countries of the region and the guarantors, remain very important.

In the light of the current political and security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the continued support of MONUSCO in maintaining peace and security in the country and ensuring conditions conducive to a smooth political process cannot be overstated. The adoption of today's resolution is therefore very important, and we hope that the Mission will carry out its mandate, strategic priorities and tasks, as outlined in the resolution, with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

We commend the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and pay tribute to the military and civilian personnel of MONUSCO, who are doing everything they can to implement the mandate of the Mission in a difficult and challenging environment. It is imperative that the Mission be given the means and capabilities necessary to carry out its tasks, including addressing the threat of the negative forces.

Finally, we are deeply saddened by and shocked and really angry at the brutality that ended the lives of Michael and Zaida, two members of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but it is not enough to lament what befell them. No stone should be left unturned in the search for the murderers to ensure that they are held accountable. We convey our deepest condolences to their families, their colleagues, as well as to the United States and Sweden, for the loss of their nationals.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I want to thank you, Mr. President, and everyone else, all our colleagues, for expressing and sharing their deepest condolences to the families and friends of Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalan. I fully share the sense of loss, of sorrow and despair at this very difficult moment.

Zaida was a Swedish-Chilean national who dedicated her life to peace and justice. She combined professionalism with compassion and she risked her own life to save others. As a member of the United Nations Group of Experts, Zaida worked tirelessly to contribute to the understanding of the causes of conflict and insecurity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We will honour her memory by continuing to support the work of the Group of Experts and the whole United Nations family in that country.

The circumstances surrounding this attack must now be thoroughly investigated. The four Congolese citizens who remain unaccounted for must be found. Sweden fully supports the investigation by the United Nations and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensure that the facts are established and that those responsible are held to account.

We welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2348 (2017) today. In the current fragile situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the agreement by the Council on a clearly prioritized mandate for this vital United Nations Mission is crucial. We thank France for its able leadership during the negotiations. The resolution contains two clear priorities. First, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has received a robust efficient and updated mandate to protect civilians and, secondly, the resolution provides support to the political process by making it a key priority for the operation. There is now a need to reduce the current unacceptable levels of violence and to fully implement political agreement as a basis for moving towards free, democratic and peaceful elections, which is essential.

The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a long-standing item on the Council's agenda. The future of the country is ultimately in the hands of the leadership and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, we hope that today's action by the Council can help contribute to moving the country one step closer to the stability and prosperity that its people deserve.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The thoughts of the Senegalese delegation are with Zaida Catalan and Michael Sharp. We would like to convey our sincere condolences to their families and the Swedish Government and the American Government. Our thoughts are also with the four Congolese nationals whose whereabouts are still unknown. We must find the murderers of Zaida and Michael and bring them to justice.

Resolution 2348 (2017), which we have just adopted by consensus and which renews the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), marks without a doubt a critical phase in the United Nations presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, we hope, towards lasting peace and stability in a great African country and a friend of Senegal.

My delegation was guided, throughout the process of negotiating and drafting the resolution, by the desire to see strengthened coordination on the ground among the various partners of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensure the greatest possible impact for the activities of the United Nations and the African Union, of course, as well as the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region of Africa.

Today's resolution reaffirms the Council's support for the implementation of the San Silvestro agreement. It reaffirms, among other things, our support for MONUSCO and improves its agility. We hope that, with better equipment, MONUSCO will be able to contribute more effectively to the protection of civilians and, at the same time, in coordination and cooperation with the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo, to combat and neutralize the negative forces.

I take this opportunity to express Senegal's support for all United Nations staff who have worked tirelessly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. First and foremost, I would like to thank Mr. Maman Sidikou, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who is a dear friend of ours. It is in that spirit that Senegal, a troop-contributing country, is awaiting the strategic review of MONUSCO and wishes every success to the mediation efforts of the Conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo aimed at ensuring a credible and successful peace process.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First and foremost, allow me to add our voice to the expressions of solidarity and condolences that have been expressed you, Mr. President, and by Council members, to the family members and the countries of origin of United Nations experts, Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalan, who, together with their Congolese interpreter, Betu Tshintela, tragically lost their lives while seeking to carry out their tasks in a dedicated, thoughtful and responsible way. We convey our sincere condolences to their families.

Uruguay commends the Security Council for its unanimous adoption of resolution 2348 (2017), extending the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The majority of Uruguay's peacekeepers are deployed in this peacekeeping operation. For that reason, the text we that we have just adopted is of particular importance to my country.

The current situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is complex, and the contingents deployed there, as well as the defenceless civilians, are faced with difficult circumstances that have shown no sign of improving. In that connection, Uruguay would like to express its robust support for the recommendations of the Secretary-General contained in his report S/2017/206, wherein he requests that the number of deployed staff not be reduced and that the number of formed police units be increased. We would like to underscore that the reduction in MONUSCO personnel provided for in this resolution clearly does not correspond with the situation on the ground.

Uruguay believes it essential that United Nations resources be used in the most efficient way. However, in this particular case, we are skimping on resources in a peacekeeping operation whose circumstances still show no signs of improving. It is therefore vital, as far as Uruguay is concerned, that the reduction in the number of troops deployed not affect the essential protection-of-civilians tasks that are currently carried out by MONUSCO. It is worth highlighting that the Security Council has already recently made cuts to peacekeeping operations and has concluded some sanctions regimens, but it has done so in places where the situation on the ground has shown progress. Notwithstanding the aforementioned, we congratulate the penholder and all delegations for their constructive approach, as well as for the spirit of compromise that was evident in the negotiations surrounding this resolution.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

The United Kingdom welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2348 (2017) and is pleased to sponsor this important text. We are grateful to all involved and will particularly highlight the roles played by France as penholder and by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Maman Sidikou.

This is a crucial resolution that has come at a crucial time for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The political agreement of 31 December 2016 brought hope to the people of the country for the first-ever peaceful transition of power. Sadly, that hope is beginning to fade. We continue to see worrying delays in the implementation of that agreement — in turning words

into action. We continue to see increasing tensions and insecurity throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We also continue to see a clear link between the escalation of local conflicts and national politics. It is essential therefore that the Council remain focused on developments in the country during this fragile period and that it be prepared to respond to developments.

Vulnerable civilians, who have already endured far too much, continue to bear the brunt of this instability and uncertainty. The resolution sends a clear message in response. In particular, we welcome the fact that it does the following three things. It gives clear priority to the essential tasks of protecting civilians and supporting the implementation of the political agreement; it reaffirms the importance of human rights, including monitoring and reporting on human rights in the context of the elections; and it retains the robust mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) to tackle armed groups in order to protect civilians, including through the Intervention Brigade.

We all know that mandates are only as good as the brave men and women delivering them. So this resolution also puts in place measures to increase the effectiveness and the efficiency of MONUSCO. It places an emphasis on the importance of performance and calls for a full strategic review of the Mission. It also includes a reduction in the number of troops. This is not about doing more with less, but about using MONUSCO's vast resources in a better, more focused way.

Finally, the killing of the two members of the group of experts is a tragic reminder of just how challenging and complex the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo still is. The United Kingdom would like to underline our gratitude to all those who serve in MONUSCO and in the group of experts, and to send our heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Michael and Zaida. We pledge to uphold their legacy by carrying on the essential work they were doing when they were so tragically killed.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Gata Mavita wa Lufuta (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Sir, as your presidency of the Council comes to an end, I wish to express the full esteem and appreciation of my delegation for the skilful manner in which you have steered the Security Council's debates during the month of March. I would also like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to take the floor before the Council at this meeting regarding the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

My delegation is duty-bound to welcome the presence of His Excellency, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania. I highly appreciate his participation in this meeting. I thank him for his personal support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which he has provided on behalf of his country and on behalf of the States of the Southern African Development Community.

Finally, I want to convey to the Council the gratitude of the Congolese people for the efforts undertaken over the past few years by the United Nations, which continues to seek to restore peace and stability in my country.

Before continuing, allow me to share the sorrow of my Government and to convey to the Governments of the United States of America and of Sweden, as well as to the United Nations, in particular the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the group of experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, its feelings of profound sadness following the death of the two United Nations experts in the province of Kasaï Central. My Government, which conveys its profound condolences to their families and to their loved ones, deeply regrets the deaths of these experts, who for many years were committed to the cause of my country and who died while trying to help it to restore peace. My country is committed to pursuing the investigations already launched to shed light on the tragic circumstances of their death and to identify the perpetrators of that heinous act, as well as to exact the necessary punishment against them.

My delegation takes note of resolution 2348 (2017) just adopted. We thank you, Sir, once more for your commitment to the cause of our country. That commitment is reflected in the firm willingness of the United Nations to spare no effort in putting an end to the situation prevailing in the east of my country, which, as is known, has caused millions of deaths and remains at the heart of the many abuses from which the population

in that part of the country continues to suffer. It is in that spirit that my delegation welcomes with satisfaction the renewal of the mandate of MONUSCO, as well as the arrangements made to improve its effectiveness, in particular for the Force Intervention Brigade.

My delegation hopes — as was also highlighted by the Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of my country, Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, before the Council — that the implementation of this mandate will reflect the expectations of the Congolese people and will be conducted effectively so as to allow us to achieve the goals assigned thereto, and to allow for the swift restoration of peace in my country.

However, my delegation is somewhat concerned by the failure to take into account among the strategic priorities of the new MONUSCO mandate, certain important sectors — such as disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration, as well as security and justice sector reform. The implementation of those sectors has been deferred until after the elections. With respect to disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration, our concern is based on the belief that this process should go hand in hand with eradicating armed groups. We think that by intensifying operations to eradicate armed groups, this process could have provided greater encouragement to combatants in the two groups to lay down their weapons and to receive the guidance that would facilitate their reintegration into society.

Along similar lines, in this important phase the success ofsecurity and justice sector reform could have been promoted by the restoration of the rule of law in troubled areas and the vital support of MONUSCO. However, the Government will do its utmost to safeguard the gains achieved together in that sector by ensuring their implementation. Moreover, my Government reassures the Council of its determination to complete the investigations launched by the high court to shed light on the recent events in Kasaï Central.

Before closing this chapter, my delegation would be grateful to the translation services to make the corrections necessary to bring the French version of the text of the resolution in line with the English-language original, in particular as concerns paragraph 10.

My Government takes note of the downsizing of the MONUSCO contingent by 3,600 Blue Helmets, and will continue its strategic dialogue with the United Nations and international and regional partners in order to determine the schedule leading to the orderly and definitive withdrawal of MONUSCO from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Allow me to come back to two points that we think are important and that we think deserve greater attention. I will begin with the Conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo (CENCO). As we know, CENCO received a mandate from His Excellency, Mr. Joseph Kabila Kabange, President of the Republic, to carry out good offices with the political class and the civil society of our country to reach a consensus with a view to peaceful elections. Its mandate came to an end three days ago, as the CENCO reported the results of its mission to the President.

With regard to objectives of the CENCO mission, as the Council has surely learned, in spite of the efforts of many the parties were unable to agree on two main points of discord and thus did not sign the specific arrangements, which would have culminated in an agreement on 31 December 2016. The two points of discord are related to the methods by which the Prime Minister is appointed, as well as to the origin and appointment by consensus of an individual to chair the national council for the monitoring of the agreement, following the death of Mr. Tshisekedi. In spite of the points of discord, CENCO has made suggestions to which the Head of State has pledged his full commitment.

For the President, the current deadlock should not be viewed as a failure; talks will continue with a view to taking the most appropriate steps at the earliest opportunity to implement the 13 December 2016 agreement. The Head of State has thus acknowledged that the Prime Minister should be a member of the opposition, which is not a signatory of the 18 October 2016 agreement, and in particular of the Rassemblement, and has called on the parties to select by consensus a chairperson of the Council of Elders. Because he is in charge of ensuring that the country's institutions function effectively, the President will address the nation in both houses of Parliament, in accordance with article 77 of the Constitution.

The second point of discord is related to the combatants of the Sudan People's Liberation Army in opposition in our country. My delegation cannot understand the reasons for the Council's procrastination on that issue. The Council was given detailed information about the situation involving those

combatants, for which MONUSCO alone is responsible because it brought them into our country. That is why my Government, drawing on past experience, continues to ask the Security Council to take the steps necessary to remove those combatants from our country, return them to their home or find a suitable third country to host them.

The Council is well aware that, at that time, the international community had asked my country's Government to open a humanitarian corridor to allow Rwandans fleeing their country during the genocide into our territory. Today, resolving the controversial matter involving the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) — a situation that the international community created and for which it should assume responsibility — is a burden borne by the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As the Council knows, that situation is not only responsible for instability in the east of my country, but it has also claimed the lives of more than 6 million of our fellow citizens. In the quest for a solution to the issue of the South Sudanese combatants, resolution 2348 (2017) should have put the United Nations at the forefront of that endeavour, rather than the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Before I conclude my statement, I would like to point out that the countries of the region that bear witness to the recurring conflict in the east of my country do not understand why, after so many years in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO has been unable to put an end to the conflict situation. Those countries not only work together; they have also brought that concern to the attention of the United Nations. This time, they would like MONUSCO's mandate to yield results and restore peace to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, as recommended by the framework agreement, allow them to live harmoniously in peace and to begin development projects that foster regional integration.

I would like to end on that note and, on behalf of my Government, warmly thank all MONUSCO troop-contributing countries — in particular the Intervention Brigade — for the many sacrifices they make daily to allow peace to be restored in my country. Once again, on behalf of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I would like to profusely thank all of the members of the Security Council.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): At the outset, I would like to join the members of the Security Council in extending profound condolences following the loss of life of the two experts of the United Nations, who paid the ultimate price in their professions, while working in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We sincerely hope that there will be an adequate investigation and that justice will be done for the victims of such senseless killing.

As the current Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee for the Southern African Development Community Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, I have the honour to deliver these remarks on behalf of the 15 members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which includes the Democratic Republic of Congo, under consideration in today's meeting of the Council. As troop contributors of the Intervention Brigade of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), SADC members have a keen interest in the renewal of the MONUSCO mandate. We thank the Council for its unanimous adoption of resolution 2348 (2017).

I thank the Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for giving me this opportunity, during the final hours of the presidency of the United Kingdom, to make some remarks on the resolution for the renewal of the MONUSCO mandate. I also thank and congratulate all 15 members of the Council led by France — the penholder — for negotiating in good faith and in a constructive manner a difficult text, which has finally been agreed upon and has been adopted. I pay particular tribute to the three African non-permanent members of the Council, namely Egypt, Ethiopia and Senegal, as well as the sponsors of the resolution, for their spirited engagement in the negotiating process.

SADC wishes to reaffirm its solidarity and partnership with the United Nations, the Security Council and Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres, in particular, in seeking a lasting solution to the protracted security and political challenges in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has lasted for over a decade. The creation of the Force Intervention Brigade by the Council in partnership with SADC four years ago was a unique innovation to the United Nations doctrine of peacekeeping and peace support in dealing with an extraordinary and complex security and political situation that has evolved and existed in

the Democratic Republic of the Congo for many years. Over the past four years, the Intervention Brigade has demonstrated its usefulness in undertaking difficult security operations in the process and has contributed to enhancing the overall credibility of MONUSCO.

As an integral part embedded in MONUSCO, the Intervention Brigade can be good and effective only if the rest of the MONUSCO mission is equally good and effective. For that reason, despite its temporary configuration, the Intervention Brigade deserves to be recognized and appreciated. SADC trusts that the current renewed mandate by the Council has adequately taken into account the symbiotic relationship of the two dimensions of MONUSCO. As the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/206) has underscored, there are new security threats in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that have emerged beyond the Kivus. New asymmetrical strategies and tactics by the multitude of negative forces have also emerged. The tactics, including terrorism, low-intensity, guerrilla-type insurgency, fetish violence and the ideology of genocide continue to rear their ugly heads in the region. Such developments are changing the nature of combat operations and require additional assets to make MONUSCO more effective in dealing with those negative forces.

Similarly, issues such as politically motivated agendas, gross human rights violations and the protection of civilians from community-based violence are posing additional challenges to the rest of the integrated MONUSCO mission, made up of soldiers, police and civilians. We believe that has been factored into MONUSCO's renewed mandate. We fully agree with the views articulated by Council members this afternoon about the fact that we need to make MONUSCO more efficient and effective, not so much in its numbers but in its performance.

Despite these new security and protection challenges, the Security Council, SADC, the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the countries of the International Organization of la Francophonie should take advantage of the current political situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to find a lasting solution to its problems. This time the Government and other political actors in Kinshasa should not be allowed to use security concerns to once again delay or renege on the political commitment arrived at on 31 December. In that regard, we believe that MONUSCO will have a special responsibility for securing a political space that will enable the holding of free, fair and peaceful elections.

The logistics of organizing elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are indeed daunting. SADC is urging the international community to support the Independent National Electoral Commission in registering voters and organizing countrywide elections. It is equally urgent to ensure that all of us engaged in this partnership put pressure on all the political actors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with a view to overcoming the current political impasse in implementing the 31 December agreement brokered by the Conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo.

To that end, in the next two weeks SADC will field another ministerial mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to confer and consult with the political stakeholders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are not willing to see the agreement falter again, as we have before. As the efforts to rekindle the political process continue, collective action should be taken together with the experts available in the United Nations system to address issues related to disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement, which my colleague from the Democratic Republic of the Congo referred to and which must be dealt with if we are to see sustainable peace and stability there.

Lastly, I believe that the current opportunities in the security and political sectors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the innovations that have been introduced into the MONUSCO mandate, may finally pave the way for an exit strategy for the United Nations peacekeeping and peace-support missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, something that has evaded us for more than two decades.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania for his statement.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.